<u>storing a</u> value corresponding to the total units consumed <u>in a second</u>

<u>memory area; and</u> [is stored],

<u>updating</u> the second area [being updated] only when the number of units

consumed exceeds or attains the number of <u>bits</u> not stored [bits of] <u>in</u> the first area [(A)].

2.   (Amended) A method of managing a counter according to Claim 1,

[characterised in that] <u>wherein</u> the units consumed are recorded in the first area [(A)]

cyclically.

3.   (Amended) A management method according to [Claims 1 and 2,

characterised in that] <u>claim 1, wherein</u> an operation of recording n units consumed

comprises the following steps:

       - reading the content of the first area [(A)] and comparing the number of

not stored bits (L) in the first area [(A)] with the number of consumed units (n) to be

recorded,

       - if [this] <u>the</u> number of not stored bits (L) is greater than or equal to the

number of units (n) to be recorded, <u>storing</u> the bits (n) to be recorded [are stored in the] <u>in</u>

said first area [(A)],

       - if [this] <u>the</u> number (L) is less [,] <u>than n, storing</u> L bits [are stored] in the

first area [(A)] and [the] <u>recording</u> (n-L) remaining units [are recorded] in the second area

[(B)] by performing an operation of updating this area, and

       <u>erasing</u> the first area [(A) is erased].

4.	(Amended) A management method according to [any one of Claims 1 to 4,

characterised in that] <u>claim 3, wherein</u> an operation of updating the second area [(B)]

comprises a step of writing in this second area a new coded counter value equal to the

current value to which the number of stored bits in the first area [(A)] and the (n-L)

remaining consumed units to be stored are added.

5.	(Amended) A management method according to Claim 4, [characterised in

that] <u>wherein</u> the updating comprises a prior step of recording indicator information [(C2)]

signifying that an updating is currently being carried out.

6.	(Amended) A management method according to [any one of the preceding

claims, characterised in that] <u>claim 5, wherein</u> the unit counter has an area [(SB)] for

backing up the second area [(B)] and [in that] these two areas each have a field for

recording a redundancy code [(CR, SCR)], for checking the integrity of the content of

these two areas.

7.	(Amended) A management method according to [Claims 4 and 5,

characterised in that] <u>claim 6, wherein</u> an operation of recording n units consumed also

comprises a prior step of verifying the state of the counter comprising the following

operations:

> - verifying the absence of the indicator information for a current update:

>> - where the indicator information is [indeed] absent:

- [verification of] <u>verifying</u> the validity of the fields

containing the redundancy codes:

. where the fields are valid:

- recording [of] the n units;

. where the fields are not valid:

- detection of a fault and stoppage of the counter,

- where the indicator information is present:

- activation of the recovery operation to re-establish the

integrity of the contents of the counter.

8.   (Amended) A management method according to [Claims 6 and 7,

characterised in that] <u>claim 7, wherein</u> an operation of updating the second area [(B) then]

includes the following steps:

- recording the indicator information [(C2)],

- copying, in the backup area [(SB)], the coded value [(V0)] of the counter

of the second area [(B)],

- recording the new coded value of the counter in the second area [(B)],

- erasing the indicator information [(C2)].

9.   (Amended) A management method according to Claim 8, [characterised in

that] <u>wherein</u> the recovery operation [consists in] <u>comprises</u> determining at which step the

abnormality occurred, and then performing, according to the circumstances determined, the

steps of updating <u>at least one of</u> the backup area, [(SB) and/or of] the second area [(B) and/or of] <u>and</u> the first area [(A)].

10. (Amended) A management method according to Claim 9, [characterised in that] <u>wherein</u> the determination of the step at which the abnormality occurred [consists in] <u>comprises</u> reading the content of each of the areas in order to determine whether the abnormality occurred during the updating of the backup area [(SB)], case 1, during the updating of the second area [(B)], case 2, during the erasure of the first area [(A)], case 3, between the updating of the second area [(B)] and the backup area [(SB)], case 4, or after the updating of these two areas, case 5, <u>and:</u>

[. in] <u>for</u> case 1 [in]:

- copying the value contained in the second area [(B)] into the backup area [(SB)],

- updating the second area [(B)] by recording the new value which is equal to the old one to which the content of the first area [(A)] is added,

- erasing the first area [(A)], <u>and</u>

- erasing the indicator information [(C2)];

[. in] <u>for</u> case 2 [in]:

- copying into the second area [(B)] the value contained in the backup area [(SB)] by adding the value contained in the first area [(A)],

- erasing the first area [(A)], <u>and</u>

- erasing the indicator information [(C2)];

[. in] <u>for</u> case 3 [in]:

- erasing the content of the first area [(A)], <u>and</u>

- erasing the indicator information [(C2)];

[. in] <u>for</u> case 4 [in]:

- implementing the steps according to case 2;

[. in] <u>for</u> case 5 [in]:

- implementing the steps according to case 3.

11.   (Amended) A management method according to [any one of the preceding claims, characterised in that it comprises] <u>claim 5, further including</u> the step of recording information signifying a failure [(C1)] in reading or writing to the first area, [(A)] deactivating [the] said area when it has not been possible to read or write in this area, [and a step of reading this] <u>reading said</u> information <u>signifying a failure</u> at each new cycle, <u>and</u> <u>directly recording</u> the units consumed [then being directly recorded] in a coded manner by an operation of updating the second area [(B)].

12.   (Amended) A management method according to [Claim 5 and] Claim 11, [characterised in that] <u>wherein</u> the information [(C2)] indicating a current updating and the information signifying a failure [(C1)] in reading and writing to the first area are recorded in a third area [(C)] of [the] said counter.

Cancel claims 13 and 14, and add the following new claims:

--15.   A security module for the protected management of a unit counter in which the number of units of a commodity consumed by users is recorded, comprising:

a first memory area having a predetermined bit capacity, in which at least one bit is stored for each unit that is consumed;

a second memory area in which a value indicating the total number of consumed units is stored; and

a control mechanism which updates the value stored in said second memory area when the sum of the number of units consumed plus the number of bits stored in said first area is at least equal to the bit capacity of said first memory area.

16.   The security module of claim 15, wherein said security module is contained in a terminal that manages the consumed units.

17.   The security module of claim 16, wherein said terminal is a telephony terminal.--